

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
October 8, 2015

Location: Middlesex Fells Reservation Visitor Center (Botume House)
4 Woodland Road, Stoneham, MA 02180

Time: 3pm: Meet at Sheepfold for trail walk
4pm: MARTAB Meeting at Botume House (ends at 6pm)

Members Present:

Bill Boles: Mountain Biking
Larry Tucker: Snowmobiles
Dick O'Brien: Community Trail and Greenways
Dick Williamson: Rail Trails
Mike White: 4-Wheel Driving
Charlene Saulnier: Dog-Walkers

2015 Massachusetts Trails Conference Update

- Trails Award: MARTAB received 4 nominations for the 2015 MA Trails Award. The board discussed and voted on a winner for this year's award, to be presented at the Trail Conference.
- Discussion about the possibility of additional awards next year, possibly to recognize a "project of the year" or certain time period and a "lifetime achievement award" for an individual or organization.
- The process for the Trail Award needs to be updated to encompass greater public involvement. Brainstorming on this over the next few months.
- A Senator or Representative should present the award. The DCR Commissioner will be invited to write a letter in support, and the DCR rep. at the conference can read it.
- Presentations and MARTAB duties: Once the schedule is finalized, MARTAB members will be asked to sign up for at least one session in which they will be the moderator/facilitator, or, if that role is not needed, simply be present and available in the case of issues/technical difficulties at a session.
- Discussion of next year's conference and the need for a consultant or grantee to coordinate and organize the conference entirely, under the direction of DCR and MARTAB. The board should spread the word that entities are encouraged to apply for an RTP grant to organize the conference. This would be an excellent use of RTP Education funds

Broad Brook Coalition Grant Project Amendment Review

- Broad Brook Coalition submitted a letter in response to MARTAB's decision to reduce funding for their 2015 grant, based on questions about the dock location and viable alternatives. The letter was reviewed by all MARTAB members and a vote was conducted to approve the additional funds for this grant, based on the original submitted location of the dock. Dick W moved to add funding to the Broad Brook grant, Larry seconded, Unanimous vote.

DCR Commissioner Letter – Response to MARTAB Letter Re: Trails on Watershed Lands

- MARTAB received a letter from the DCR Commissioner in response to the Board's letter to DCR concerning trails on watershed lands. The end of the letter offers a meeting with the Commissioner to discuss the issue further. MARTAB determined that they would accept the invitation for a meeting. The goal of MARTAB will be to act as a representative supporting all trail users and advocating for responsible and safe access to watershed lands in limited areas.
- It is incumbent upon MARTAB that they rely on factual statements and that all statements made in this discussion so far be examined for the accuracy, supported by factual evidence.
- MARTAB would like to consider itself the moderator on this topic and to work to identify ways that all parties can come together and have a seat at the table, while respecting the issues and needs of each group.
- MARTAB does not intend to act as a NEMBA proxy on this issue – there are other users that have been affected by the loss of recreational opportunities in the watersheds, and it is MARTAB's objective to represent all trail user groups.
- Land is being acquired within communities as watershed lands, which in turn becomes lost recreational opportunities for local and regional trail communities.
- Losing stakeholders in a given area by cutting off trails makes the area more vulnerable to misuse and abuse.
- It is also important to look at the DEP and EPA requirements for watershed lands and understand the strict limitations and conditions associated with permitting a watershed and keeping its "waiver of filtration". "Rogue trails" have been identified as having triggered closer scrutiny by EPA and DEP. MARTAB should identify these points and discuss solutions as a part of the meeting.
- MARTAB should come up with alternatives or suggestions for moving forward on this issue in the trail community, looking at both sides and advocating for constructive and useful feedback and opportunities going forward.
- All letters going into and out of DCR/MARTAB/NEMBA should be fact-checked before the meeting, to ensure that the board is going into the meeting as an informed and educated body.
- It was agreed that MARTAB will request a meeting with the DCR Commissioner to discuss this issue further, as a representative of all user groups in the trail community. All MARTAB members, representing each statewide trail user group,

will need to collaborate on providing information and feedback before this meeting, and attend the meeting as their stakeholder group representative.

Updates on RTP and Trails/Funding in Massachusetts

- Dick O'Brien is encouraging MARTAB members to spread the word and send communication to the administration about supporting the use of the RTP funds in the Environmental Bond Bill. He also urged advocacy for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has been de-funded.

MARTAB 501(c)3 Status

- The question of where MARTAB stands in this process came up. It is important that MARTAB obtain this status in for many reasons. Dick said that the group still needs to come up with the funds for attorney fees to file the legal documents. However, Mike White mentioned that there is a streamlined process that non-profit groups are using to obtain 501(c) status – recent legislation has made it easier to go through the process. Dick will check into this and see if it is something that MARTAB can do on its own.